1/2/69

Dear Penn,

It is perhaps a futility to write you when you have just hung up on me when I was about to put you straight on the purpose in returning to New Orleans when I did in December. Yet because of the great liking and respect I have for you I do.

I will not argue the matter with you all over again. First because you will not listen, and you did not while we were talking. You attempted to justify what could not be justified. I tell you that a case was faked. Both of the principals had airtight alibis. There were very real. No effort was made to check it out, as nothing was checked out - not the hospital records, not the morgue records, none of it. The witnesses interviewed by a man who has earned my trust and a man who has sacrificed much because of his personal dedication to Jim, withoutmexception dispute saying ~~thay~~ what they are quoted on. Those who detected the very obvious error were promptly labelled "agents" to Jim. It is really that bad.

Now you can believe it or not, but I am telling you I interviewed Palmer at length on this. I asked him to let me tape it and he declined. I asked him to make a tape he would not give me but would keep and that, too, he declined. He acknowledged that what he had he would not dare giw even a city editor, that none of it was proved.

What you apparently do not realize and didn't care to listen to hear is that I went to New Orleans for only one purpose: I was very worried about what Jim himself said when I returned there from Dallas and from what people outside the office asked me about and asked me to check up on. That checking I did made it beyond question that there was deliberate lying going on, and that is the best that can be said about it.

Boxley was not there to defend his work because it could not be defended. There was no secret that I was going there, or that Vince was. He chose that time to leave New Orleans, and in my presence, when Jim asked him to return, he declined. I saw Jim but one time when I was there, the day we got there, when we had lunch together. I doubt I spoke to him for five minutes and I never once mentioned Boxley's name. Nor did he. I saw him briefly the following Sunday, when I parked the car I was driving at the NOAC, where he was, said hello, and got in Moo's car with him to leave and have lunch with him. Jim fired Boxley, as I understand it, simply because the irrefutable proof was in his hands that ~~his~~ Boxley's work just did not stack up.

The earlier checking on Bradley established that he was very publicly in Europe the time of the Perrin death. My source, the man who did the ~~xxxx~~ checking, confirmed it when I phoned to ask him. I trust him as I do you, and for the same reasons. Now restrict yourself to a single thing, the accuracy of the work that was done. Would you keep an apprentice cub reporter who did such work?

I learned that Boxley had been fired when I saw the press release the morning of the day it was issued. Jim wrote it, no one else, as he always does. He consulted no one else. When I read it I tried to get it chnaged, for I felt the wording was unfair to Boxley. Every one of the people you think have done these terrible things to Jim was of exactly the same opinion. Every one of them was opposed to the wording. Most were opposed to any release at all, as was I. Jim did it, all alone, and there is no one pumping drugs into him. That, too, is Boxley's

For the record, I have no way of knowing whether or not Boxley is CIA. I have no reason to believe it. If you ask me if I think he might be sick, I'll give you an answer. Regardless, this was all Jim's idea. I did not go down with the idea of getting Boxley fired, did not ask or suggest it to Jim, did not know about it until after he made the decision. I rather suspect that he was a terribly upset man when he saw what had been fed him by a man who he trusted very much - so much he never checked up on what he was turning in to him.

There are other things I will not go into by this medium. Remember, I told you you could see everything I have, without knowing you have the involvement you quite obviously have. That was and is an open offer. You have failed to accept it. In fact, you never once answered any of the letters I wrote you, and I kept expecting you to come up, kept rearranging the things I have committed myself to do to spend this time with you.

In defense of the action Jim took, without agreeing with the manner in which he did it (for with that I disagree), I tell you that had Boxley been a CIA agent he could not have been a bigger disaster. Unless and until you check this out, personally, you are not in a position to evaluate anything he has told you. He started feeding that pill stuff to the N.O. TV stations, all of which hate Garrison and would love to clobber him, immediately. They found it so inconceivable they phoned the office to report it when I happened to be there - twice! That is not all Boxley said. He has Jim a Manchurian non-candidate. Penn, believe what you will, but until you find out for yourself - or at least make the effort to - do not do anything you will not thereafter be able to live with. The Rich thing is only one. Had that come off as originally scheduled, it would have happened before the Supreme Court decision in the Shaw case, that would have been entirely a different decision, the entire hogwash being mixed by Boxley and associates would have been dynamite, and there is little likelihood that Jim would not have been disbarred when the Supreme Court said it had to grant relief because of Jim's very obvious abuses.

You have apparently made up your mind without knowing anything at all about my trip to New Orleans, which is not what I would have expected of you. When it is possible to check things out and you do not, that is your responsibility. I suggest to you that, regardless of any personal attachment you may have to Boxley, this is all in the realm of fact, and I not only invite you to check it out for yourself, I dare you to! But how you could reach such decisions, involving and about me, without talking to me and when you were failing to answer my letters, I just do not understand. It is entirely unlike you.

Much damage has already been done. About that, at the moment, little can be done. There can be things done not to do more damage. I hope you will bear this in mind and, if you feel impelled to do anything, first know the fact, not the dubious self-serving representations of someone who is involved and at best cannot be regarded as impartial. There is fact. It is, as it has been, available to you. Believe me, so far as my part is concerned, you could not possibly be any more wrong. Speaking about the entire thing generally, pretty much the same is true. Try and bring your mind to bear on this. Do not be the creature of carefully-fed emotions. There is much I just cannot put in the mails or on the phone. We will be lucky if there is no mistrial on the basis of the wrong things already done. And so far as the office is concerned, there is no doubt that the Shaw trial is upcoming. Whether or not it is, there is no doubt they expect it this time.

Penn, I most sincerely hope you do not, with whatever laudable motive, do something you may spend the rest of your life regretting. My best to you all.